

REV. JAMES CRAIG—HEIRS OF.

[To accompany Bill H. R. No. 320.]

MARCH 9, 1860.

Mr. Cox, from the Committee on Revolutionary Claims, made the following

REPORT.

*The Committee on Revolutionary Claims, to whom was referred the memorial of the heirs of the Rev. James Craig, deceased, late of the county of Lunenburg, and State of Virginia, asking compensation for property belonging to said James Craig, which was found in the use of the American army, and was destroyed by the British army in 1781, have had the said memorial under consideration and submit the following report:*

It appears to your committee to be established in this case, that James Craig, a minister of the gospel at the time of the war of the American revolution, and residing in Lunenburg county, Virginia, was a leading, active and distinguished patriot. Being a man of considerable property, he owned, with other species of it, common at that time to Virginia farmers, a very large milling establishment, located on a stream called Flat Rock creek. Said milling establishment consisted of a large flour manufacturing mill, a corn mill and a fulling mill. There were also located near to these a house used for receiving grain, and a house used for dyeing cloth, and also a blacksmith's shop.

During the progress of the war, this milling establishment became a place of deposit and storage for supplies of grain and provision for the American troops, Mr. Craig himself being actively engaged in collecting said supplies and aiding by every means in his power the patriot cause.

In the year 1781 the contest was transferred from other States, where it had been carried on with great animation, chiefly to Virginia, and in October of that year both the campaign and the war were closed by the brilliant and ever memorable victory at Yorktown, in that State. But in the early part of the year the line of operations was greatly in the country around Lunenburg. And to meet the wants of the American troops, Parson Craig had collected at his mills, about the month of July, in the year 1781, a large quantity of grain and provisions, some from his own and some from his neighbors' stores. At that time the British officer, Colonel Tarlton, with a detachment

of troops, being in that vicinity, and hearing of Parson Craig's activity and zeal as a patriot, and of the supplies which were in store at his mills for the use of the Americans, marched to his estate, took Mr. Craig himself prisoner, carried off a number of negroes, two of whom were never recovered, and burnt and destroyed the whole or nearly the whole of the said establishment, with the supplies of grain, provisions, &c.

The flour manufacturing mill, the corn grist mill, the cloth fulling mill, the house used to receive grain, and the blacksmith shop were all consumed and destroyed with the contents of each, including implements, fixtures, tools, utensils, &c.

That these ravages, and the imprisonment of Parson Craig himself, were all owing to his ardent zeal and efficient services to the patriot cause, and to the fact that said mills were in the use of the American army, or filled with supplies for their use, cannot admit of a reasonable doubt; and it would be just that his heirs should be compensated for the entire loss. But your committee anxious not to violate usage or transgress the principles clearly established in such cases, have determined to allow for nothing more than the property devoted to the use of the American troops at the time of its destruction, and destroyed on that account. In this limitation they have not included the slaves, live stock, &c.; but they have taken the houses, implements, fixtures, tools, &c., with a portion, say one-half, of the supplies on hand. What this property was worth it is impossible accurately to ascertain at this day. Your committee are satisfied that it was not worth less than ten thousand dollars, and report a bill for that sum. That Parson Craig himself had a competency, and did not ask for this compensation in his lifetime, and that his children omitted to do it, does not affect the justice of the claim. It was due to him, and he died without receiving it. His children have also died without getting a dollar of it. His nearest descendants and proper heirs are now his grandchildren, James Craig, Edward C. Craig, John A. Orgain, and Ann, his wife, formerly Craig, ——— Carter, and Martha, his wife, Rebecca Gregory, George E. Gregory, Richard C. Gregory, and James C. Gregory. Not so wealthy as their honored grandfather, but in the vicissitudes of fortune placed in a condition of life in which this sum is very important to their comfort, they have appealed to the government for this imperfect and tardy justice. Your committee are of the opinion that the government should render it promptly and cheerfully to the extent already indicated.

The committee therefore report the accompanying bill.